

2003 Accomplishments

In his first year as a County Councilmember, George Leventhal achieved several important objectives to improve the quality of life in Montgomery County. Among these were:

I. Clean Energy

Councilmember Leventhal passed a resolution with unanimous support of his colleagues mandating that 5% of all electricity procured by Montgomery County government must originate from clear, renewable sources. Wind power will be the first source of this electricity because presently, wind power is more cost effective than solar, hydrogen or other clean energy sources. The 5 % requirement will take effect at the beginning of FY05 (July 1, 2004).

II. Health Care

As chairman of the County Council's Health and Human Services Committee, Councilmember Leventhal increased the budget for community-based health care clinics by \$340,000 in FY04 to a total of \$1.3 million. These clinics are the most effective way to provide healthcare to uninsured residents of Montgomery County. Councilmember Leventhal also increased the budgets of the African American Health Program and the Latino Health Initiative by \$100,000 each for a total of \$625,000 each.

III. Alternative Transportation

Councilmember Leventhal won enactment of legislation to ensure that bicycle owners are not charged exorbitant parking rates. Under his legislation, residential and commercial bicycle parking rates may not exceed one-tenth of the automobile parking rate for bike racks and one-sixth of the automobile parking rate for bike lockers.

Councilmember Leventhal is also among the region's leading advocates for the Inner Purple Line and other mass transit improvements.

IV. Childhood Obesity

Councilmember Leventhal convened a community forum on childhood obesity December 5 attended by more than 200 people. The forum identified the many health risks associated with the current epidemic of overweight and obese children. Councilmember Leventhal has also convened a task force on childhood obesity that is exploring ways to encourage increased physical activity and better nutrition for children. In response to the Councilmember's forum, the Montgomery County School Board has prohibited the sale of soda and junk food in vending machines during school hours.

V. Collaboration Council

Councilmember Leventhal won enactment of legislation restructuring the Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families, making it an independent nonprofit that will be better able to obtain federal and private funds to help keep families together, provide juvenile offenders with alternatives to incarceration, and support after school activities, among other objectives.